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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 6 May 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Immediately after this meeting is adjourned, Mr. Bazanov, the Chairman of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament, will brief those delegations which are interested in the chemical weapons issue on the progress of the chemical weapons deliberations in Geneva.

Moreover, I would cordially invite the members of the Bureau of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as the Chairmen of the Working Groups of the Commission to attend a meeting of the extended Bureau of the Commission on Tuesday, 7 May, at 6 p.m. in Conference Room B.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: The Disarmament Commission is now entering the last week of substantive consideration of various agenda items by the four working groups. During the course of deliberations, various views were expressed and proposals made by delegations on the subjects under consideration. I am pleased to note that a large number of delegations have submitted to the Commission their working papers on different agenda items and these have been circulated. This truly demonstrated the keen interest and active participation of delegations in the work of the working groups.

As I pointed out at our last plenary meeting, held on Monday, 29 April, this meeting will be devoted to the second round of progress reports of the Chairmen of the Working Groups on their work on their respective agenda items.

REPORTS BY CHAIRMEN OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group I, Ambassador Andre Erdös of Hungary.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary): During the course of the second week of the session, Working Group I had five meetings. In accordance with its work programme, the Group considered the second and third parts of its future report, entitled "Principles" and "Scope".

Following the pattern developed in connection with the first part, entitled "Objectives", the Working Group, in each case, first had a detailed and in-depth discussion of the subject. In addition to the proposals submitted in formal working papers, delegations also contributed with informal proposals, orally or in writing, to the deliberations. All those suggestions were, as a second step, compiled in conference room papers, which then served as a basis for a new round of more concentrated discussions. Basing itself on what transpired from that exercise, and also making use of further textual contributions, the Chair submitted its suggested texts on each - hitherto three - of the parts of the future report.

Today discussion started on the fourth, and last, part, entitled "Machinery". By the end of tomorrow's meeting, the Chair will have to be prepared to draft its suggested text on that part, too, and then to present to the Working Group, together with a possible introductory paragraph, all the suggested texts in one single conference room paper. On Wednesday and Thursday, the Group will consider and discuss this draft document. In view of the short time available this year, it is not possible for the Group to conduct a further thorough-going debate. The draft text will, therefore, be handed over to the 1992 session as the Chairman's suggested texts, which

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

reflects a fair amount of agreement within the Working Group, but which still has some way to go next year before it may be adopted by consensus as a final report on the issue of objective information on military matters.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of Egypt, who is speaking on behalf of the Chairman of Working Group II.

Mr. SHOUKRY (Egypt): I have the distinct honour once again to present this progress report relating to Working Group II on behalf of Mr. Moussa, who was recalled to Cairo yesterday for urgent consultations.

We have now held eight meetings of the Working Group on the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons. Since our last plenary meeting, at which I reported the progress made on the general exchange of views, we have considered the Chair's proposed structure of work. Each day the Group has focused on one of the four items of the proposed structure, and there has been wide-ranging discussion on each item. Although some of these discussions revealed divergent views in various areas, such as a comprehensive test ban and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, the debate has shed light on new areas where a possibility for consensus may exist.

(Mr. Shoukry, Egypt)

In addition, a number of proposals have been made which have drawn the interest of many delegations. For example, numerous delegations have commented on the working paper introduced by Argentina on the possibility of establishing multilateral nuclear warning and crisis control centres.

Another working paper, introduced by Australia, drew attention to the arms limitation efforts as outlined in the United Nations comprehensive study on nuclear weapons. It also specified five areas in which it hoped the Working Group could make progress. These areas include non-proliferation, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances, confidence-building measures, and nuclear weapons and international law. While a number of delegations supported Australia's five points as areas on which the Group should focus, other delegations felt that while those were areas on which consensus might indeed be reached, their preference was to incorporate items that warranted focusing on.

Consequently, it was decided that the Chairman should undertake bilateral consultations to see if agreement could be reached regarding the areas on which the Group should concentrate, or whether it should continue with wide-ranging discussions on all nuclear matters and on the future work of the Group, for the last remaining week of this session of the Disarmament Commission as well as for the next two years.

Today, I have therefore been consulting with various concerned delegations, and will continue to do so after this plenary meeting, to try to reach agreement on the future direction of our work.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group III, Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): During the second week of our work, and after the plenary meeting of the Commission last week, Working Group III held four meetings. In the course of our work, six working papers were introduced to the Working Group, by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/CN.10/149), Austria (A/CN.10/151), China (A/CN.10/152), Ecuador (A/CN.10/153), the Netherlands (A/CN.10/154) and Pakistan (A/CN.10/158).

After the general exchange of views in the first week of our session, the first meeting of Working Group III was devoted to organizing the next stage of our work. The discussion on the organization of work spilled over into the second meeting, held last week. It is the view of the Chairman of the Working Group that, while we have had a rather lengthy discussion on the organization of work, the discussion was necessary in view of the sensitivity of the substantive issues that are involved.

On the basis of this discussion, I prepared the Chairman's working paper circulated in Working Group III as document A/CN.10/1991/WG.III/CRP.2, containing a structure for an in-depth substantive consideration of agenda item 6. The Working Group then proceeded to an in-depth substantive discussion on the first two topics in the Chairman's working paper, "Relationship between regional disarmament and global security and arms limitation and disarmament" and "Principles and guidelines".

These two topics were discussed at the third and fourth meetings of Working Group III, held last week. I am pleased to report to the Commission that the substantive discussion on the two topics has been very encouraging. Ideas and proposals contained in the various working papers and also those put forward during the discussion were clarified, elaborated and developed. Above all, it is gratifying to note that a convergence of views has emerged on possible elements concerning the first two topics.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

This convergence of views will be further developed through the appropriate consultation mechanism. For this reason, I am not as yet in a position to report to you on the specific aspects or areas on which there is an emerging convergence of views.

Today, we will continue with our work by holding substantive discussions on the remaining topics.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Chairman of Working Group IV, Ambassador Araujo Castro.

Mr. ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil): Since I presented my first progress report to the Disarmament Commission a week ago, Working Group IV has proceeded in a constructive manner to deal with the mandate with which it was entrusted, that is, to consider the various aspects of item 7 of our agenda, entitled "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields".

In accordance with our programme of work, the Working Group has held a total of nine meetings. After concluding the general exchange of views, which occupied our first three meetings, four meetings were devoted, last week, to preliminary discussions on each of the four sub-items I referred to in my progress report to the plenary meeting on 29 April, namely: scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security; science and technology for disarmament; the role of science and technology in other related fields; and the transfer of high technology with military applications.

Last Friday, we held an informal meeting in which we discussed the organization of our work in the remaining days of this session and the format, nature and content of the final report of the Working Group.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Brazil)

This morning we held a second and more focused round of discussions on sub-items 1 to 4 in an attempt to identify, in a more detailed manner, the areas of general agreement and of differences of opinion, with a view, in particular, to the future work of the Commission on various aspects of agenda item 7.

In the course of this last week, three more working papers on this item were presented, in addition to the three I mentioned in my statement of 29 April.

The delegation of the Netherlands presented, on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, the working paper on the question of science and technology for disarmament, in document A/CN.10/155, which contains some basic considerations as well as a list of examples and suggestions for scientific and technological applications in the arms control and disarmament fields.

The delegation of Colombia presented the working paper in document A/CN.10/156, which expresses, in eleven points, its views and suggestions on various aspects of the the question of the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields.

The delegation of Austria presented the working paper in document A/CN.10/159, in which, drawing on the discussions held on various aspects of agenda item 7 and on various working papers that have been submitted, it presented a series of seven points for the consideration of the Working Group.

(Mr. Araujo Castro, Brazil)

The discussions we have been holding on the different specific aspects of agenda item 7 have been, I believe, quite useful. The Working Group is very much aware of the basic difficulties of its mandate. These are extremely complex matters that are being dealt with for the first time in a systematic debate in the United Nations, in a rapidly changing international environment. But it is encouraging to note that differences of perspective and new ideas and insights are being presented in what I would not hesitate to qualify as a very constructive and cooperative manner.

It is my hope to be able to present to the Commission next week a report on our work during the 1991 session of the Disarmament Commission that will objectively reflect the work that has already been accomplished and that will point the way, as clearly as possible, towards the specific work that it is felt should be carried out on this agenda item in the next two years.

The CHAIRMAN: We have completed the second round of reports of progress on various agenda items. As indicated in the adopted general programme of work, contained in document A/CN.10/1991/CRP.1, all working groups should finalize their reports by Friday, 10 May, at 6 p.m., so that the Secretariat can process those documents for consideration and adoption at the plenary meeting on Monday, 13 May.

Is there any other matter at this stage? I see none.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform members that immediately following this plenary meeting, our colleague, Ambassador Serguei Batsanov of the Soviet Union, will give a briefing on the progress made in the working group of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on the negotiation of a chemical-weapons convention.

The next plenary meeting will be held on Monday, 13 May 1991.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.